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A

General Summons
FROM THE
AUTHORITY of TRUTH,
UNTO ALL
Ecclesiastical Courts
AND
OFFICERS.

Wherein they may see what *Truth*
objecteth against their Practice
and Proceedings in Cases
of *Conscience*.

By *WILLIAM SMITH*, K

of Bestons in Nottinghamshire

And I will punish the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity: and I will cause the Arrogancy of the Proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible, Isa. 13. 11.

London, Printed in the Year, 1668.

The Epistle to the READER.

Reader,

W Here Knowledge is heaped up concerning Truth, and the Truth not obeyed and practised, it makes the World like a Wilderness, or the height of Babel: for all People are out of order that do not obey and practise Truth: And by how much their Knowledge is large, even so much the more Confusion aboundeth; because that Knowledge puffeth up the fleshly mind with false notions and conclusions, and whatsoever Worship is set up from such a knowledge it only receiveth Life from the Power of Temporal Laws, and all such Worshipseither live or dye as the Law favours them or is against them; and such things are gotten up among the apostatized Christians, who are gone from the Spirit and Power of God: And so Bishops, Pastors, Vicars, Curates and People do erre and go astray from his wayes like lost Sheep, as they confess. And what is to be expected in such a Worship, where the Spirit and Power of God is waning? And what is to be expected from such Bishops, Pastors, Vicars and Curats, as erre and go astray from his wayes like lost sheep? Do not such erre and go astray as walk in their wayes, who walk not in the way of God? And notwithstanding there is a confession of erring and going astray, yet People are driven forward in such wayes by the force of Temporal Laws, and so People must either erre and go astray, or come under the punishment of such Laws. Now let the wise and moderate Reader consider, whether such are going, as erre and go astray from the way of God? are they not going to the Chambers of Death and Destruction? And is there any cause why People should be forced, by Temporal Laws, to walk in that way? Oh that it might be seriously layd to heart! for such as erre and go astray like lost sheep, have more need to forsake their wayes, than to compel others to walk with them; for Christ hath sheep that hear his voice, and follow him; and those sheep do not erre and go astray from his wayes, but feed in his Pasture, and rest under his Shadow, and he saves them from the Wolf and Beasts of Prey. And all such as confess they erre and go astray from his wayes, they must turn unto him and follow him who is the Light of the

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World,

The Epistle to the Reader.

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World, and Way to the Father; and then they will not erre and go astray like lost Sheep; but be gathered into the Fold, and into the Pasture; and there is neither Bishop, Pastor, Vicar or Curate that can come into this state, but as they come to the Light with which Christ Jesus enlightens them; for who be from the Light, are in Darknesse, and that is the cause why they erre and go astray like lost Sheep. And can any be true Worshippers of God, whilst they erre and go astray from his wayes? And is not God worshiped in his own way? And yet such as confess they erre from his wayes, would force others to worship with them, but such are seen in the Light, and their end is manifest, and many are delivered out of such wayes, and gathered into the way of God, and so he is known to be a Spirit, and worshipped in the Spirit and in the Truth, which is his own way; for his Spirit doth not lead astray from his wayes, and they that have received his Spirit and live in it, they live in the Truth; and they that be in the Spirit, Life and Power, the outward Law can neither give Life, nor bring Death upon their Worship, because it standeth in the Substance which endures for ever.

So Reader, be thou mindful to obey the Light with which Christ Jesus enlightens thee, and that will keep thee from going astray like a lost sheep; for that which goeth astray is a wanderer from the Light, which is the Guide in the way of God, and they that erre and go astray are following and worshipping the Beast and false Prophet, whose habitation is full of Persecution, by which the Saints and household of Faith are afflicted: But now the Lamb sits in Judgment, and the Beast, and the Whore, and the False Prophet are judged, and their House will fall over their heads, and those that sit with them, and they will feel the burden off their house upon them; and there will be none to take the burden of: Therefore whoever thou art that readest, mind that which giveth Understanding, that thou mayest be a follower and worshipper of the Lamb, and not of the Beast, and the Whore, and False Prophet; for of a Truth, the Lamb and the Saints must have the Victory.

W. S.

A Gene-

A General Summons from the Authority of TRUTH, unto all Ecclesiastical Courts and Officers, &c.

Friends,

YOU have taken upon you a Work of great concernment, but how you are qualified and fitted for it, is the thing to be considered; for there are several Objections may arise against you, and this is not the least; Whether you be in such a Spiritual capacity, as to judge of Spiritual matters, or fully to determine cases of Conscience, from a spiritual discerning and understanding? for many are unsatisfied concerning the proceedings in such cases, and it is not without some ground, when your practice and proceedings in such cases are truly examin'd and rightly compared, with the practice and proceedings of Christ and his Apostles, who had power and authority, in the true Spirit, to try and judge of all things pertaining to the Conscience; and though you pretend the same thing, and have given your selves the title of *Spiritual Men*, and your Courts *Spiritual Courts*, and so sit to try and judge of things pertaining to the Conscience, yet you are not found upon the true Judgment Seat, neither do your proceedings in such cases, run in a true Line of Spiritual Men before you. So that the precept of the Spirit, nor the president of Christ and his Apostles, are not your Rule; for where did they set up Courts to try and judge in such cases? And who did they summon to appear before them? and who did they Excommunicate for not Hearing their Service, or for not appearing to their Summons, or for not Baptizing their Children, or for not Receiving the holy Communion, or for not Repairing Steeple-houses, which you call *Churches*, or for not paying Tythes? and who did they Imprison or cause to be cast into Prison, when they had Excommunicated them? Compare

pare your practice and proceedings with theirs, and then see if there be not good cause to Object against your practice and proceedings in such cases : For you have set up Courts, and Proceedings which are not to be found in the Scriptures. And your first work is to enquire of the Town-Officers (who are your Intelligencers) if there be any people within their Parishes, that do not go to their Parish-Church, and hear Divine Service ; and if there be any such, then they must present their Names and Dwellings in to the Court ; and then your next work is, to send a *Pastor* with a *Summons* from the Authority of your Court, unto such parties so presented, and to require them to appear before you ; and when many have simply appeared according to your *Summons*, you commonly ask them, *If they go to their Parish-Church, and hear Divine Service ?* or something to that purpose. And though they give you an Answer according to the Scriptures of Truth, you will not be satisfied with it, but except they will conform to what you would have them, you proceed to *Excommunication*, and so return it to the *Temporal Power*, to cast them into Prison : and if they do not appear to your *Summons*, you also proceed in like manner, and so you make the Magistrates your Servants, and the Sheriffs your Bailiffs : For upon the return of your *Excommunication* to the Magistrates, they direct their Writ to the Sheriffs, and the Sheriffs arrest the partie or parties by their Warrant, and so cast them into prison, and keep them in prison upon your account ; and here you are the cause of laying heavy burdens upon some mens shoulders, for you address your selves to the Magistrates, and procure their Writ, and they issuing forth their Writ to the Sheriffs, in answer to your minds, the Sheriffs are thereby forced unto Execution, though they well know, that such upon whom the Writ is to be Executed, do not at all deserve such corporal punishment as Imprisonment ; for as to People in Corporations, they well know one another, as being Neighbours together ; and for Sheriffs of Corporations to be forced to execute a Writ upon their Neighbours, which unto them are well known to be honest and well-disposed men, and such as are of good report, and also serviceable in their places and callings, doth not this bring a burden upon their Consciences in so doing ? and yet being compelled and forced to it, they do not see how to avoid it, as wanting strength to gainsay it, and
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by that means, there are many of them brought to do such things, in such cases, as ate against their own Consciences, and thereby draw burdens and trouble upon their Consciences; And is not this a heavy state which you plunge People into by your proceedings, as to cause them to do that which is against their Conscience, and so bring them into trouble of Conscience? And there may be a question whether any Law in force do bind the Sheriffs, to execute a Writ of that nature in such a manner, but that is left to their own examination and finding out. And now are these things either like *Spiritual Men* or *Judicious Temporal Men*? And is this your Church Censure to cast out honest People, and cause them to be Imprisoned because they cannot for Conscience sake conform unto you? do you not believe your selves, that there is good cause to object against your proceedings in such cases, by which honest People are so exposed to sufferings; for you do not only Excommunicate them, and cause them to be cast into Prison, but you also judge them unworthy of common dealings and society amongst men? And if any have to do with them by way of dealing, or come in their company by way of society, then they must become liable unto the same Judgment and Censure of your Court: And so your proceedings tend to destroy common dealings and society among Neighbours, which the Law of the Nation taketh care to preserve; for the Law hath great regard unto common dealing and trading, and would not have any man to be discouraged in it, because it is a principal upholder of the Nation, by supplying all outward wants from one hand to another. And you judge and censure this, which the Law of the Nation encourageth, and so your proceedings are found to be against the Law of the Nation, and consequently destructive to the Nation: And are not such proceedings worse than the *Jews* against the young man, whose eyes Christ opened? for they did but cast him out, and all they had against him for so doing, was only because he would not deny him by whom his sight was restored, to own their sayings. And what have you more against those People called *Quakers*, save only that they dare not deny Christ Jesus to own your practice, and yet you proceed further against them, than did the *Jews* against the young man; for you cause them to be cast into prison, and we do not read that the *Jews* did so by him; so you are found in a worse spirit than were the *Jews*, who only cast the young man

1154 man out, and no more; but that will not satisfy you except the body be cast into Prison. And was it not the *Jews* that Crucified the Lord of Life? Now if your Church was a true Church, and your service Divine, then you would seek to gain people by Love, and not proceed against them in such a manner: But your fruit makes your Church and service manifest what they are who persecute honest harmless people, that dare not defile their Consciences with polluted things: and may not people go to the Church and hear Divine Service, except they go to your Steeple-house and hear your matter? And may not people perform Divine Service without they hear what you have to say? for Service standeth in performing, and not only in hearing: for many may hear the true Spirit in its reproof, and yet not obey it to become servants to it: and such are not in Divine Service, though they may hear the Divine Spirit. And may not people meet with the Lord, and hear his Divine Spirit, and perform Divine Service in no other place but where you would appoint them? Would you be limiting the *Holy One*, and keeping people in bondage by your limitations? for if they cannot conform unto you, then you cast them out from you, and so cast them into prison. And is not your limitation the very ground of this Bondage? And is the not-going to your Steeple-house a Fact of so high a nature, as to be Excommunicated and cast into prison for refusing? If it be, then shew the offence against God and his Truth, or otherwise you cast people into prison without shewing any cause, and that is against the Law of the Nation: for no Free-man is to be Imprisoned without cause shewed; and the *Quakers* are Free-men, and you Imprison them by your proceedings without shewing cause, for the cause must be some offence against God and his Truth, and the Offence is to be proved by two or three Witnesses, or otherwise it is not an offence of that nature as to come under Excommunication, and consequently a Prison. And as for the *Quakers*, you have never yet shewed any such cause upon your proceedings, and therefore, as to them, your Excommunications are void, and such falsely Imprisoned who suffer upon that account; forasmuch as you have not at any time proved them offenders against God and his Truth, which is the cause of Excommunication; and they that tryed and judged such cases in the true Spirit, they proceeded to Excommunication upon such cases as were proved

proved to be an offence against God, and his Truth, but they did not proceed to imprison any by the power of temporal Laws, nor by their own power, though such offences were proved against them; as might bring them under Excommunication, neither did they proceed against those that were without; but if any that was called a Brother, was a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, they were to put away from among them such wicked persons (so mark) they were amongst them against whom they proceeded to Excommunication, and those that were without they left to be judged of the Lord, 1 Cor. 5. For a man is first to be within before he be cast out, and when he is within, as to profession, and then walketh not according to the Rule of Truth, and will not receive Admonition, to be reformed from his abuses, then he is to be cast out as a wicked person. So the Apostle did not say, If any will not come to our Worship, and hear our Service, or will not have their Children Baptized, or will not receive the holy Communion, as now commonly used, or be in Error in matters of Religion or Doctrine allowed in the Church, or pay not their Tythes, or Tenths; that then they shall proceed to cast out such as wicked persons: He did not lay these things down as a ground for such proceedings, but he took notice of the wickedness which was an offence against God and his Truth, and so laid down the most principal matters upon which they were to proceed for the casting out such offenders from amongst them; and this was their Practice who judged in the true Spirit, and cast out offenders by the power of the true Spirit. But you cast out such as are not offenders in any such matters, and count them unworthy of common dealing and society among men, and cause them to be cast into prison, by the Temporal Power; and so you cast out sober, and righteous, and godly people; whereas they cast out drunkards, and fornicators, and such as were in transgression, but they did not Imprison them; and you are doing both, and that to a people who are neither drunkards, nor fornicators, nor any way offenders against God and his Truth, but live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, and you have not any thing further against them, but as to things pertaining to their Consciences, of which you are not able to judge; so that if you did not first make causes you could find none in the Quakers to give you any occasion to proceed in

such a manner against them ; and besides they are not of you, but are separated from you, and those causes you make are, in themselves so slender and weak, as that they cannot any way bear the weight of such proceedings ; neither ought you to be judges in the case, so far as the cause is your own, and the Law of the Nation, excludeth men from being Judges in their own Cause ; as supposing that men in their own Cause, will eye their own Interest more than the common good ; and therefore it excludes them from trying or judging in that case ; and yet you go much further, by taking upon your selves the whole matter, as in these particulars.

1. *There is no Cause but what you make.*

2. *There is no Evidence but your own Conclusions.*

3. *There is not any to give Judgment or Sentence besides your selves.*

Now every Cause is to be of that nature, as the Law properly in it self will take hold upon, by which it cometh under the power of the Law to be determined ; and every such Cause is to be proved by such Evidence as are not related to it, and also to be determined by such Judge or Judges as are no way concerned in the matter ; and so all parties, which may stand any way related unto the Cause, either in Evidence or Judgment, are excluded. But your Proceedings are wholly left unto your selves, and your own Interest is involved, which makes you parties ; and what plea can be held against you in such a case, to obtain right from you ? For it is to be understood, that you have not made such Causes, and gotten power to act in such proceedings, as to give judgment against that which you have made, or to determine the matter against your own Interest ; and so it may well and safely be concluded, that you are resolved in the beginning how the matter shall end ; and not any plea, though never so good and sound ; that will help the Defendant in his Cause. And here you are beside the Law of the Nation again, for every good and sound plea, is to be admitted on the Defendants behalf in all Courts of trial ; and the Defendant is to have the benefit of his Plea, so far as it will hold good against the Plaintiff ; and hereby many Plaintiffs are overturned in their Cause, and all Judges standing equal in Judgment, as to the Cause of both parties, do suffer the matter so to be tried and proved before them, as that they may from a good understanding, do right unto the party grieved. But you will not admit of any Plea, though
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never so good and sound, according to Scripture, which is the chief plea on the Defendants part against you, yet you will not admit of it to the Defendants benefit, by doing him right accordingly, but with confidence proceed to Excommunication, if there be not Conformity given; and so your proceedings are found to be against the Law of the Nation in these particulars.

1. *In destroying common Dealings, and Society among men.*
2. *In Excommunicating and Imprisoning, without shewing sufficient cause.*
3. *In being Judges in your own Cause.*
4. *In not admitting the Defendants Plea.*

And as these things are the very foundation or ground of your proceedings, and being found to be against the Law it self, so the Law doth not properly stand by you, neither can you properly stand by the Law, for the Law doth not properly stand by any thing that is against it, but rather takes hold upon it to suppress it; and if this were well minded, you would not be admitted to sit in the highest seat of Judgment concerning Spiritual things.

Now you first cause People to be presented for not going to their Parish Church, and then you proceed to Excommunicate and Exclude them, and no Plea will be admitted by you in the Case; And is the first an offence in your account, and is not the latter of as high a nature? Surely, if there be an offence in the first, it is much greater in the latter, forasmuch as you exclude from that which you cause to be presented as an offence for not going to; and then, if People were willing to go, they are excluded, and being excluded, they may not be received until they have purchased your Absolution, and this maketh an offence on your parts, and that according to your own conclusion. For, if not going be an offence, then exclusion must needs be greater; and that falleth upon you as the Actors; and here you draw a guilt upon your selves in your own work. And what necessity is there for you to cast out and exclude People for that which they are not in, is not this a high degree of confusion in your proceedings? For, if you would have People go to your Steeple-house and Service, then overcome with Love and convince them by sound Doctrine, and if you judge them unworthy, then let them alone where they are, and do not run your selves into such confusion, as to cast such out as are without before, and

158 then judge them unworthy of coming in, without your Absolution. But if you should do so, then you would lose your gain, after which you seek, and your *Diana* would fall, and your Craft be spoiled; and indeed (to speak plainly) that is the main thing you strive to uphold; for your Courts draw fees from such as cannot withstand you, and your Absolutions bring money from such as fall under you, and so your proceedings end in money; by which it is manifest, that you are not so much for the honour of Almighty God, as the love of Lucre; and if that was not to be obtained, there is good cause to believe, that your Courts would soon dissolve of themselves; but whilst there is any hope of gain or profit, you will keep them up, if the Magistrate will but help you; and you have found out so many devices to compass your gain, besides that device for not coming to your Steeple-houses, and Service, as it is a hard matter to escape your Snares, especially such as be of a tender Conscience; and for the sake of such here are some of your devices opened, and with the Scriptures of Truth compared, by which trial you are found much wanting.

1. You have devised to bring people into your Courts, for not Baptizing their Children, as you call it; and where doth the Scripture command Baptizing of Children after your manner, as to sprinkle water in their Faces, and to sign them with the sign of the Cross, and to have Godfathers and Godmothers to undertake for them? For though Christ in his love and tenderness towards little Children, would have them suffered to come unto him, and not forbidden, and that he took them in his arms, yet we do not read that he sprinkled water in their faces, and signed them with the sign of the Cross, or that they had Godfathers or Godmothers to undertake for them; but he said, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 19. 14.* by which he shewed their Innocency, and his love to them in that state. And now you have gotten a Law to compel people to Baptize their Children, as you commonly use it, though Christ used it not: and if People refuse to use it, then you have a snare for them. And was it not above four hundred years after Christ before sprinkling Infants came in? Read *Eusebium*; And Christ did not mention water when he sent forth his Disciples to Teach and Baptize all Nations, but commanded them, *To Baptize in the Name, or into the Name, of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost,* Mat.

Mat. 28. 19. And the Apostle said, That by one Spirit they were all Baptized into one Body; 1 Cor. 12. 13. and this is beyond your outward sign which you are commonly using, and it standeth by the Authority of the Spirit, and of the Scriptures, without the help of any Temporal Law. And do you not say, the Scriptures are your Rule? and yet you are using such things as are not to be found in them, and have a Law to compel or punish those that cannot use the same things with you.

2. You have devised to bring People into your Courts, concerning your Communion, as you commonly use it, and call it holy; and it is believed that the Communion of the Saints and Apostles was as holy as yours; and yet we do not read that they Excommunicated and cast such into Prison, as would not be partakers with them. And was not the Communion which they used, *the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ?* See 1 Cor. 10. 6. And did not the Apostle put people upon *the Examination of themselves before they ate of that Bread, and drunk of that Cup which was their Communion?* 1 Cor. 11. 28. (So mark) He did not say, *If there be any that will not receive this Bread, and this Cup, as we commonly use it, that then we will Excommunicate them, and cast them into Prison.* They did not proceed in such a manner, who had the true Communion amongst them, but said, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* So see what your Communion is, who proceed to punish people that cannot receive it as you commonly use it; for the Apostle bids People *Examine themselves, and so let them eat;* and you bid People either come and eat, or you will proceed to punish them; and here is a great difference between your minds and the mind of the Apostle.

3. You have devised to bring people into your Courts, for Error in matters of Religion, and Doctrine, by you allowed; and do you not believe your selves, That the Religion and Doctrine which Christ and the Apostles allowed, was as sound and true as yours? And we do not read that they Excommunicated and cast such into Prison, who differed from that Religion and Doctrine by them allowed; for the Apostle bid people *examine themselves whether they were in the Faith;* He did not say, You are in Error as to the Religion and Doctrine which we allow, and we must Excommunicate you, and cast you into Prison, and we have a Temporal Law to do

it; but he saith, *Examine your selves, whether you be in the Faith: prove your own selves, know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates, 2 Cor. 13. 5.* And by that Examination and proof, he would bring people to know Christ Jesus in them, and so bring them out of the Reprobate State, in which is the Error: And this was sound Doctrine, by which he laboured to bring people to the knowledge of the Truth, that they might be saved; and that was to Christ Jesus in them, who is the Salvation of God. And so the Apostle would not, that people should be Reprobate concerning the Faith, and live in Error, and therefore he preached sound Doctrine to them, that he might open their Understandings to know the Truth; And the Doctrine that he preached was Christ Jesus in them. And this was the Religion and Doctrine which the Saints allowed and approved, and they warned such as did receive it, *That they should not receive another Doctrine, though they, or an Angel from Heaven should bring it.* And though they certainly knew, that their Religion and Doctrine was Truth it self, yet we do not read that they Excommunicated and cast such into Prison, as differed from them in Religion and Doctrine, for they were of a better spirit, than to deal with people in such cases, after such a manner. Therefore see what spirit you are of, and first Examine and prove your selves, whether you be in that Religion and Doctrine which they allowed, who had the Spirit of Faith in Christ Jesus: For though you may have a Law in such cases, and by that Law may proceed to Excommunicate and Imprison, yet if such against whom you proceed, be in that Religion and Doctrine, which they allowed who had the true Spirit, they are in the Truth and not in Error; and by such proceedings, you make your selves no less than fighters against God, and his Truth; by which it is manifest that your power is not of God, and so the Error is your own. And the 5th. of *Eliz. 23.* is your great authority in these cases.

4. You have devised to bring People into your Courts for not paying your Tythes; and in that case, *Hen. 8.* and *Edw. 6.* provided something for you; but how that now standeth in force, as to your proceedings, the matter is something questionable. And if Tythes be not yeilded and paid, then according to that Statute made in *2. Edw. 6. 13.* you are to have a Writ *Excommunicato capiendo*, out of the Chancery, against the party, or parties so refusing,

sing, and if they can be found, then to cast them into Prison; and if they cannot be found, then the Statute of the 5th. of *Eliz.* 23. giveth power to leavy Fines of 10. *l.* the first *Capias*, 20. *l.* the second, and twenty pounds the third; and if the party or parties do not yield their Bodies to the Sheriff upon Proclamation; then twenty pounds upon every *Capias*, *ad infinitum*, according to that Statute. And so you are furnished with Statutes for your purpose in the case of Tythes. But are these things according to the Rule and Command which Christ gave to his Disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the Gospel. Surely you have looked more into the Statutes, than you have done into the Scriptures, for did not Christ say to his Disciples, when he sent them forth, *Freely ye have received, freely give*, *Mat.* 10. 8. And do not you say, *Give us Tythes, or we will give you Punishment according to the Statutes*? And is not here a great difference between your voices, and the voice of Christ? And is not the true Shepherd known by his voice? and are not Thieves and Robbers known by their voices? And which of you will go forth and freely give what ye have, as the Disciples did? Or must you not first know what the Tythes of such a place will afford you before you go unto it? And will not more Tythes and Profits call you from that place again unto another? And do you not hereby manifest that you do not freely receive the Ministry as the Disciples did, and so are in the disobedience unto the Rule and Command of Christ, and are minding earthly things, for your Belly, which is your God? Oh the *Lust of the Flesh*, and the *Pride of Life* which corrupteth the Earth! The Power of the Lord is manifest to cleanse the Land, and the Earth from such defilements; yea he will sweep it as with a Beesom, and will drive the Locusts before him until the Land be cleansed. And when Christ offered up himself a Sacrifice unto God, then did he end the Law with Tythes and Offerings: For it is granted, that there was a Commandment under the Law, by which Tythes were payd; and they that were of the sons of *Levi*, had a Commandment to take Tythes of their brethren, according to the Law, *Heb.* 7. 5. But you are compelling Tythes from such as you cast out, and do not count them brethren, and so you erre from that Commandment under the Law. But it cannot be granted that Tythes are now to be paid by the Power of that Commandment, forasmuch as Christ hath disannulled it, *Heb.* 7. 18. and being dis-

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annulled, the force and power of it is taken away; and he never gave commandment afterwards for Tythes to be paid, nor his Apostles neither. And you may see how *Paul laboured with his own hand, that he might not be chargeable*, 1 Cor. 4. 12. 1 Thes. 2. 9. He had not his Paritors about him to send unto such as would not pay him Tythes; and this makes a great difference between you and *Paul, for he laboured with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable to any*; and you sit at ease, and are chargeable to many; for you will have your Tythes, and your pay from such as do not set you on work, neither have need of your work; and as Christ hath disannulled the Commandment going before concerning Tythes, and that he did not revive it again by his own commandment, so it must needs stand disannulled to all intents and purposes whatsoever: For among Temporal Powers, there is that regard to the disannulling of any Law, as that it shall no more be put in Execution without it be again revived, but standeth wholly and fully disannulled and repealed. And will people have less regard to the power of Christ Jesus, than unto Temporal Powers? For as Christ disannulled that commandment, by which Tythes were pay'd under the Law, and did not again revive it by his own command under the Gospel, so it standeth wholly and fully repealed unto this day, and no man hath power to revive it, or cause it to be put in execution; for Christians are to keep the commands of Christ, and not to keep up commands which he hath disannull'd; for that is to keep up the *Jews practice* among Christians, and so deny Christ Jesus, *who is the End of the Law*, not only for Tythes, and Offerings, and Oblations, but also for *Righteousness to them that believe*. And have Kings and Princes of the Earth such Power and Authority as to revive that by their Law and commandment which Christ hath disannulled, and left disannulled? Will you set Kings and Princes of the Earth above Christ Jesus the King of Glory, and Prince of Life? And will you proceed against people to Excommunicate and Imprison them from such a ground and Foundation. Surely it is not altogether your Ignorance but your Interest that puts you forward in this work.

And if you say, that the Church is to be preserved in Discipline and Order by the Magistrates Power, and as they have provided Laws in such cases, so you must put them in execution according to their

their own intention, and that you are blameless, as doing nothing 1163
 but what the Law enjoynes you, which in your places you cannot
 avoid; and so according to your own perswasion concerning your
 proceedings you would seemingly clear your selves from persecuti-
 on: But this Covering will not hide you, though it be the largest
 that can be spread over you; and if you would clear your selves by
 it, as not being the constitutors of such Laws, then you must needs
 make the Magistrates guilty, and you have no cause at all to do so,
 seeing you reap the Profit; and if you would lay it upon them, to
 excuse your selves, you requite their pains for you after the worst
 manner, for they are your principal Upholders and Supporters,
 and that breath you live by, as to such things, you draw it from
 them, and that strength you stand by, you receive it from them.
 And have not you, or some before you, propounded and prescribed
 such wayes unto them, before they have enacted Laws for such pur-
 poses? And doth not that make you stand originally guilty of the
 matter? And doth not your prosecuting such Laws draw the guilt
 more upon you, though, as to what the Magistrates do for you in
 such cases, they are not clear, and in time they may come to see
 it, and be weary of it? And would you wholly lay your proceed-
 ings upon the Magistrates Power, and so make them bear the bur-
 den of all your work? And will that power stand by you in all things
 you practice? or do you not act in many things without their pow-
 er? and do you not thereby plainly do them wrong?

Now concerning your Scepter-house, which you call a Church,
 and bring People into your Courts, that cannot pay money towards
 Repairing it, What Law have you in that case? And is your
 Church of that Nature as it must be Repaired with money? Will
 it decay, and fall, and come to nothing, if it be not repaired and
 upheld with money? If that be the nature of your Church, as by
 your proceedings seemeth; then People have good cause to absent
 from it, and you have no cause at all to compel any to come unto
 it; for the Church is the Pillar and ground of Truth, and it need-
 eth not to be repaired with money, because it standeth in the eter-
 nal Power and Life, which decayeth not; and Christ Jesus is the
 Head and Ruleth over it, and is a Husband to it. And this is not
 like an old House that will fall if it be not kept up with money.
 And that is the Church and Church-Government which the Qua-

kers own and submit unto, and there needs no outward Law to compel them, for the day of his Power hath made them willing, and his Love constrains them; and so you can neither compel nor restrain them by your Laws; for they cannot be compelled to observe that which they know is not true, nor restrained from that which they know to be true; and whether you proceed against them according to your Law, or without Law in such cases, it is all one unto them; For they do not so much take notice of the outward Law in cases of Conscience, as they mind to keep their Consciences void of offence towards God and men. So that your proceedings are little unto them, whether you render them guilty by a Law or without Law. For as their Consciences are void of offences towards God and men; so no man can charge an offence to make them guilty: And that wipe off all your sentences and censures as fast as you give them forth. And what Law have you to proceed against people for not repairing the fence about the Steeplehouse-Yard, and for following honest labour upon those dayes you call *Holy-dayes*? have you not heaped up devices like a Mountain, and do not every device bring you some gain and profit? and is not that the principal ground why you proceed in them, and might their not be a good and sound plea held and maintained against you according to the Scriptures of Truth? and might not all your devices be overturned if such a plea could be admitted? yes surely, your mountain might soon be thrown down if Justice and Equity could but enter; therefore you have no cause so highly to lift up your horn, seeing you stand upon a slippery place.

But some may say, *What is there in all these things which is of concernment as to Life and Salvation, for Life and Salvation standeth not in such things, but by believing in Christ?*

Yes; There is great concernment in these things as to Life and Salvation, and they that would come into the true Faith, and be a believer in Christ, they must deny these things, and come out from among them: For they that believe in Christ for Life and Salvation, they do not yield their obedience to another Power, because all Believers obey his commands, and not another; so here is something of concernment as to Life and Salvation, for who are observing such things as Christ doth not command, they have not Life and Salvation in him as Believers; therefore people are to mind

mind what they obey, because they become servants unto that thing; and who are obeying any of these things, they are certainly in bondage by them; and doth not that separate from Life and Salvation in Christ Jesus? And unto what do you bring people by your compulsion, do you bring them unto Christ, or into your own observation? And if they cannot bow to your observation, then you excommunicate them, and cast them into Prison: And what command have you for such things according to Scriptures? Let us see your Scriptures if you be spiritual men, and do not presume above what is written, but keep to that which you say is your Rule; for the *Quakers* are noble, and search the Scriptures, and they find that those things you practice are not so according to Scripture. And have not people good cause to be separated from you, who erre from the Scriptures and the Power of God? And how will you stand by these things in the day when you must give account of all your deeds? Will not these deeds appear as evil deeds? and will not you appear as evil-doers? and what Law will then appear to justify you before the Judge of Heaven and Earth? for you will find him to be a Judge more righteous than your selves; and you will not have a plea to hold against him, but must bear his Judgment, because you have sinned; therefore repent whilst you have time, and learn to do well.

And why do you act so furiously against others by the power of the Law, and take no notice of your selves by the same Law? Is there not a Law for you as well as others? Is there not something which the Law taketh notice of, as to your selves, which properly falleth under the sentence of Excommunication? Doth not the Law take notice of Incontinency, Usury, Simony, and Perjury in the Ecclesiastical Courts, or Idolatry? And doth it not properly relate unto you, and brings such things under Excommunication? See 5 *Eliz.* 23. But you here stand silent, or rather dead as to any motion; and if you say that no such presentment comes before you whereby you may proceed, and that you cannot act in proceedings without some matter for a ground; unto which is answered, That if you would but as diligently search, and examine such things among our selves, as you do other things among poor country people, it is believed that you might find matter sufficient as a ground to set you upon motion; and that is the proper place where you

are to begin, for such things are offences against God and his Truth, and the Law very fitly takes notice of them as offences worthy of punishment; and the *Quakers* are not against the punishment of evil-doers: And if you would begin in your own house, and make it clean, then clean people would have some delight to dwell with you; for they that are washed and sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord, they cannot joyn to any unclean thing; therefore observe the Law and its directions as to your selves, before you be so busie to execute it upon others: But you rather choose to take notice of such things as may increase your gain, than of such things as may profit the soul. And because of these things the Land mourneth and is distressed; for you have neither precept nor president from Christ and his Apostles for such proceedings; neither can such as follow Christ own your practice and proceedings; in such cases; for it is below a Christians Life, and they that be in the Christians Life, do suffer by you that profess Christianity out of the Life. And is it not below spiritual men to plead Laws and Statutes for their proceedings in cases of Conscience? Have you no other Power and Authority in such cases but what is given you by Laws and Statutes? if you have then shew plainly upon what ground your Authority standeth; and if you have no Authority in cases of Conscience, but what is given you by Laws and Statutes, do you not thereby take away the Authority and dignity of Christ Jesus? and do you not as much as in you lieth go about to unthrone him from this right? For what Law can reach the Conscience, but *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*? And what Power is able to Judge the Conscience, but the *Power of Christ Jesus*? and what Authority can govern the Church and keep it in Discipline and Order, but the *Authority of Christ Jesus*? And would you take away his Right, and give it to another, or take it your selves? Doth not this manifest that you want his Spirit, Power, and Authority; and so the Magistrates must help you by their Power and Authority; and their Laws, in some cases, must be the ground of your proceedings, and in other cases, your own Inventions without Law, and that makes your Excommunications null and void; for the Magistrates have not that power given unto them as to what they do for you in such cases, though you, or some before you may have urged them, and drawn them to provide Laws for

you, yet they are all dead in themselves, as wanting power to serve ¹⁶⁶⁷ unto that end for which they are provided, because the Conscience is not to come under the power of any man in things pertaining to God; and though we that are called *Quakers* do own Magistrates as they are for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well; which is their proper place as Magistrates, and in such cases we are actively subject to their Power, not only for fear, but for Conscience sake, yet wherein they extend their Power to the Conscience, and thereby would give you power to exercise Lordship over the Conscience, we cannot in that place be actively subject; because in so doing, they give you power to intrude into the Authority of *Christ Jesus*: And as for Conscience sake we are actively subject to their Power in their right place, so for Conscience sake we cannot be actively subject when they stretch their power unto spiritual things, which is out of their place; and both these are for Conscience sake unto us, who are cal'd *Quakers*. For as we dare not deny the one for Conscience sake, we cannot own or submit to the other for Conscience sake. And what more is to be expected from us as to active obedience to the Magistrates power, but only in cases which pertaineth to civil things? And have we ever refused or denied obedience to their Power in any such case? And as to your proceedings by the Magistrates Power, in cases of Conscience, it might be some satisfaction unto many People, if you would openly declare by what Laws and Statutes you maintain your Courts and Proceedings, and in what Kings time they were made: For if you have not the temporal Power to warrant and maintain you, then you only move as Birds in the air, which have no certain Centre, and this is the ground why we that are called *Quakers* deny your practice and proceedings in cases of Conscience, as not being warrantable by the Law of the Spirit of Life in *Christ Jesus*, nor according to the Scriptures of Truth: And we know that no temporal Power or Law, can maintain your proceedings against the Law of the Spirit of Life in *Christ Jesus*, for it is he alone that hath Power and Authority to rule and govern the Conscience, and not any besides him; and so in cases of Conscience, your proceedings are without Power, and consequently void in Law; for without Power there is not any offence can be truly tried or punished: And herein you are found wrong doers by your proceedings, and you pull down your own building by pleading

Laws and Statutes for your proceedings in such cases, and moderate people do see that you are not spiritual as you pretend, but only in some things have the Magistrates Sword on your side, by which many become subject more out of fear than for Conscience sake. And because we cannot for Conscience sake be conformable in such cases, therefore you proceed against us and inflict punishment upon us, and that is contrary to Reason which is counted the root of the Law : For it is not a reasonable thing that the exercise of our Consciences should come under your power to be punished, whilst as to Civil things, we are not found guilty of any offence ; and this we do maintain against you to be a truth : And therefore, as to us, your proceedings are of no more force, than as you drive them forward in the strength of your own wills ; and yet there is a great noise that we will not obey the Laws, nor be subject to Government, and that we are a willful People, and deserve to suffer. Now we would have our Accusers to shew us plainly, what Law we disobey, and in what Kings time that Law was made ; and also shew us wherein we are a willful People, and deserve to suffer ; for we do not know any thing by our selves in such matters, neither can such an accusation lye upon us ; for as to all things which the Law requireth, which in it self is properly Law, we actively obey ; and as to that which in it self is not Law, as not being grounded upon Reason, which is counted the root of the Law, we passively submit ; and so we stand in the Will of him that hath called us, and patiently suffer without resisting or revenging, and this hath been known for these several years ; and where is then our disobedience to the Law, seeing we are either in active or passive obedience unto all that is counted Law ? But such accusations are only to asperse us, and cover our Persecutors ; for we do not disobey any Law whereby we deserve to suffer, but, as to Civil Government, behave our selves, in a just and peaceable manner. And is there any Law against us, as we live in that Life ? If there be, we would know when it was made, and by whom, and what punishment is to be inflicted upon such as so live ; for if there be such a Law as provideth punishment for those that live peaceably, then we are the proper Objects of it, and dare content to suffer by it ; but if there be no such Law, or Punishment provided against a peaceable Life, then do we not suffer undeservedly, because our Life is peaceable. And such accusations and

and aspersions will not clear our Persecutors, in the day when God shall Judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ; but they shall then know that they have inflicted punishment upon us, contrary to our deserts; and you, amongst others, who are the greatest promoters of it, and are also in the action by your Excommunications: And we cannot otherwise be perswaded, but you are the Womb in which our Sufferings are principally conceived, and by the Magistrates power you have opportunity to bring forth your Birth, and herein you are found to walk contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and to the Doctrine of Christ Jesus; for this is the Law and the Prophets, *That as ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.* And this is the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, *That if an Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.* Therefore see unto what you are come your selves, before you compel others to come unto you; for if you be not come to the Law and the Prophets, you are at a great distance from Christ Jesus. And, are you doing to others, *as you would have others to do unto you?* And how do you fulfil the Law and the Prophets, whilst you are doing that unto others, which you would not have others do unto you? And are you feeding Enemies, and giving them drink, according to the Doctrine of Christ Jesus? or are you not doing the contrary, & so you are neither come to the Law and the Prophets nor to Christ Jesus. And for what must People come unto you, when ye your selves are not come to the Law and the Prophets nor to Christ Jesus? Must they come unto you as unto Gentiles, who are alienated from the Life of God, and strangers to the Covenant of Promise? Must such as be come to the Law and the Prophets, and to Christ Jesus, return again to the Gentiles? for the Law and the Prophets are above the Gentiles, and Christ Jesus is above the Law and the Prophets, and such as are come from among the Gentiles, and are come to the Law and the Prophets, and to Christ Jesus, they cannot return to the Gentiles again, except they deny that which brought them forth, and though there may be some that for fear deny their Profession to conform unto your practice, yet there are many that have more regard unto the peace of their Conscience. And if you would have People return unto you, then shew them a more excellent way then that wherein they walk. For some have found a more pleasant way then they walked in whilst they walked with you, and they

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that know what it is to travel in Mire and Clay, and then come to find a Clean and Pleasant Path, they will not willingly go into the Mire and Clay again, but rather rejoyce that they are gotten past it. And we that are called *Quakers*, have learned the Law and the Prophets, and the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, and he is our *Light*, and our *Way*, and our *Guide*; and being come to the excellency of this knowledge, through the mercy of the Lord God towards us, we cannot conform to any *Beggary Rudiments*, and bring our selves into *Bondage again*. But as the power of the Lord God hath made us free, so in that freedom we wait to be preserved; and as we stand in that freedom, your Bonds are all broken, though you may cast our Bodies into Prison; for you may as easily hold the Wind in your Fist, as hold the Truth in a Prison. And can you hold the wind in your fist, that it shall not have an universal course? is not that a thing beyond your art and skill? And do you think to hold the Truth in Prison because you cast the body there? is not that a thing beyond your power and strength? for Truth will have an universal course, when you have shut the Body close in Prison; and by how much you think to bind it and suppress it, even so much the more doth it grow and spread, and you cannot bind it from the universality of its motion; and so you labour in vain as to what you do against the *Quakers*, and you are so far from fulfilling the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, that in stead of giving food and drink to a hungry and thirsty Enemy, you are persecuting us that are your Friends, and Friends to all People: and so your practice and proceedings are not only contrary to Reason, which is counted the root of the Nations Law, but contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and to the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, and also contrary to what is manifest to be the Kings mind; for that Speech which was delivered by the Keeper unto the Parliament, upon the tenth day of the eighth month, called *October*, 1667. it was delivered as the Kings mind; and by his Command, as the same Speech doth demonstrate; and what was so delivered, doth clearly manifest that the King doth regard the good of his People, as being so near an Interest to himself; and he would have the Parliament to imprint it as a known Truth in the hearts of his Subjects, that there is no distinct interest between the King and his People, but the good of one is the good of both.

Now

Now as the King would have this to be imprinted as a known Truth in the hearts of his Subjects, and that he doth include his own Interest with his People, and thereby bringeth the matter so near himself, as to concern his own good in theirs, which in it self is undeniable a very clear Truth; then why do not you receive this Truth into your hearts, and so fulfil the Kings mind? for it is to be understood, that all people within the Kings Dominion, who are free born, are accounted his People, as he is chief in outward Government; and so in general terms, he includes his Interest and good in theirs, and their Interest and Good in his own; and do not you proceed to Excommunicate and Imprison such People? and do you not make them incapable of common dealings and society amongst men? and do you not make them incapable of having any benefit by the Law as complainants? and do you not judge them unworthy of the Kings Protection? and is not this to make a distinction between the King and his People? for no common good, as to outward things, can arise to the sufferers; and as the King concerns his own good in the good of his People, by a joyned Interest; do you not wrong the King by intruding upon his Interest? Surely the mind of the King, as it is manifest, and your proceedings which you practise, are at a great distance, and much contrary one to the other, for you plainly endeavour to blot out that known Truth which he would have imprinted, forasmuch as you destroy the common good of his People, in which it so nearly concerns his own.

And now, upon what Foundation will you have your building to stand? and by what will you uphold your work in which you are so busie? for your work is found contrary to the Law of the Nation, and contrary to the Spirit of Truth, and contrary to the Scriptures of Truth, and contrary to Christianity, and contrary to Reason, and contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and contrary to the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, and contrary to what is manifest to be the Kings mind; and where will you have a Foundation to build your work upon? for as it is found contrary to all these weighty things, so by their Authority your work in cases of Conscience may well be questioned, yea, the Law of the Nation may justly question you, and the Spirit of Truth may justly question you, and the Scriptures of Truth may justly question you, and Christianity may justly que-

1172 Reason you, and Reason may justly question you, and the Law and the Prophets may justly question you, and Christ Jesus may justly question you, and the King may justly question you; and what can your Foundation be, but the love of money, which is the root of all evil? And these things are opened thus fully and largely that you might see your selves as in a glass, & others might see you with open face: And what sad effects have ensued the execution of temporal Laws, which have related to Spiritual things; was not such a Law pretended when the Lord of Life was condemned? and was not such Laws pretended when the Martyrs suffered? and are not such Laws now pretended, by which the Innocent and Guiltless are punished? and hath not the prosecuting of such Laws been the occasion of destroying the natural Life of many innocent People at this day? and doth not this fill your hands with blood? and how can you say that you wash your hands in innocency, and so approach to God's Altar, if your hands be full of Blood? And that is the end of your Laws and proceedings in cases of Conscience, for such Laws never brought prosperity in their execution, but always have been destructive, and so brought calamity and misery; and it need not be declared what hath hapned by the execution of such Laws, both as to years past, and the time present, for the blood of many declares it, and the loss of Estate declares it, and the long suffering Bonds and Imprisonment declares it, and the sound of this Declaration is higher and louder than Tongue or Pen can declare; and will not the Lord make inquisition for these things? yea surely, he will find out the work of every one, and the guilty he will by no means clear, therefore love Mercy before you offer Sacrifice, for until you love Mercy, and live in it, all your Sacrifices and Prayers are but as empty shadows; and though you may offer and make many of them, yet whilst you mingle them with violence and oppression, they never reach the Throne of Grace to find acceptation, and so the shows fall not down upon you with a blessing; and that makes Briars and Thorns spring out of the ground unto persecution: And as for the *Quakers*, you may as easily force the Sun to go backward, as force them into your practice and observation; or you may as easily restrain the shows from falling, as restrain them from worshipping God in his Spirit; for as they fulfil the mind of God, by yeelding their obedience and

and service unto him, so they cannot fulfil or satisfie your minds, 1:143
by yeelding their obedience and service unto you ; and if you were
spiritually minded, you would never endeavour to force and com-
pel them by the power of temporal Laws, but the wrong being
greatest to your selves, even so they pitty you, as well knowing the
terror that will come upon you, and therefore they labour to per-
swade you for your own good ; and do not count them your ene-
mies, because they tell you the truth in plainness, but be warned
to forsake the evil of your doings, and live in love and peace as
becometh Christians, for Christ Jesus must Reign and have the
Glory.

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and service unto him, so they cannot submit to satisfy your minds, by yielding their obedience and service unto you; and if you were spiritually minded, you would never endeavour to force and compel them by the power of temporal laws; but the wrong doing yourself to your selves, even so they pity you, as well knowing the error that will come upon you, and therefore they labour to persuade you for your own good; and do not count them your enemies, because they tell you the truth in plainness, but be warned to forsake the evil of your doings, and live in love and peace as brethren Christians, for Christ Jesus must Reign and have the Glory.



THE END.

